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150819Z Jun 00

2000HANOI01316 - CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	CTME-00
	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FBIE-00
	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01
	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OES-01	OMB-01
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/011W		
					-----631227	150821Z	/38

FM AMEMBASSY HANOI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0138  
INFO ASEAN COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY BEIJING  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
SECDEF WASHDC  
USDOC WASHDC  
DEPTTREAS WASHDC  
NSC WASHDC  
DIA WASHDC  
JICPAC HONOLULU HI  
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI//J5/FPA//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HANOI 001316

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV, EB/TPP/BTA/ODC AND INR/B  
STATE PASS TO USTR/DAMOND  
SECDEF ALSO FOR ISA/EA/LSTERN  
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USDOC FOR 4431/MAC/IEP/OKSA/HPPHO  
TREASURY FOR OASIA SURBANA  
CINCPAC FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/00

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [VM](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR REVIEWS RELATIONS WITH FM NIEN

[11.](#) (U) CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D'AFFAIRES DENNIS HARTER.  
REASON: 1.5 (B) AND (D)

[12.](#) (C) BEGIN SUMMARY: AMB. PETERSON CALLED ON FM NGUYEN DY NIEN JUNE 9 PRIOR TO THE FORMER'S DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON. NIEN HOPED THAT JACKSON-VANIK WAIVERS WOULD NO LONGER BE NECESSARY IN THE FUTURE AND THAT THE USG WOULD TAKE A MORE "FLEXIBLE" STANCE ON THE BTA. AMB. PETERSON SAID THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN WASHINGTON MADE IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THE ANNUAL JACKSON-VANIK REVIEW WOULD BE ELIMINATED ANY TIME SOON. HE TOLD NIEN THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR HANOI TO SHELVE THE BTA UNTIL VIETNAM WAS READY RATHER THAN TO CONTINUE TO INSIST UNREALISTICALLY ON RENEGOTIATION OR CONCESSIONS. NIEN EXPRESSED HANOI'S ANNOYANCE WITH RECENT CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTIONS ATTACKING VIETNAM AND REPEATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST FOR U.S. AID FOR AGENT ORANGE VICTIMS. AMB. PETERSON EXPLAINED THE DIVISION OF POWERS IN THE USG, STRESSED THE NEED TO FORGE AHEAD ON ALL ISSUES AND REITERATED OUR OFFER TO WORK JOINTLY WITH VIETNAMESE SCIENTISTS ON SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON AGENT ORANGE. THE AMBASSADOR URGED NIEN TO REVERSE HIS MINISTRY'S RECENT ACTIONS TO TRY TO RESTRICT EMBASSY  
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ACTIVITIES. TYPICALLY, NIEN WAS MAINLY IN A LISTENING MODE. REGULAR EXCHANGES ARE NONETHELESS USEFUL IN GETTING OUR MESSAGE TO THE SENIOR LEVELS OF THE GVN.  
END SUMMARY.

[13.](#) (C) AMBASSADOR PETERSON CALLED ON FM NGUYEN DY NIEN JUNE 9 TO REVIEW THE STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS PRIOR TO THE FORMER'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON TO DEAL WITH THE JACKSON-VANIK WAIVER VOTE AND OTHER ISSUES. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HE WANTED TO SEE NIEN IN ORDER TO LET HIM KNOW THAT HE WOULD BE FOCUSING PRIMARILY ON TWO EVENTS IN WASHINGTON: (A) THE ASEAN AMBASSADORS' TOUR; AND (B) TO TESTIFY BEFORE CONGRESS IN CONNECTION WITH JACKSON-VANIK. THE ASEAN AMBASSADORS' TOUR PROVIDES A BROAD AUDIENCE OF IMPORTANT BUSINESS PEOPLE INTERESTED IN KNOWING ABOUT VIETNAM'S SITUATION. IN THIS REGARD, THEY WOULD ALSO FOLLOW CLOSELY DELIBERATIONS ON THE

HILL REGARDING JACKSON-VANIK. AMB. PETERSON SOLICITED FM NIEN'S VIEWS AND ANY IDEAS THAT WOULD HELP BUILD THE RELATIONSHIP FURTHER.

14. (C) NIEN COMMENTED THAT "WE SHOULD MEET EVERY TIME YOU GO TO WASHINGTON AS WELL AS WHEN YOU RETURN." HE THANKED PRES. CLINTON AND THE ADMINISTRATION FOR AGAIN RECOMMENDING A JACKSON-VANIK WAIVER FOR VIETNAM, BUT HOPED THAT IN THE FUTURE THIS WOULD NO LONGER BE AN ANNUAL NECESSITY.

15. (C) AMB. PETERSON SAID MANY IN THE U.S. WOULD ALSO LIKE TO DO AWAY WITH THE NEED FOR ANNUAL WAIVERS, BUT THAT THE POLITICAL CLIMATE THERE MADE THIS UNLIKELY.  
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HE EXPRESSED HIS VIEW THAT THE VOTES FOR WAIVER WILL CONTINUE INTO THE FUTURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON THE BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENT (BTA) COULD GO QUICKLY ONCE A VOTE WAS ABLE TO BE SCHEDULED SINCE IT WOULD BE DONE ON A FAST-TRACK, UP-OR-DOWN VOTE BASIS. THIS WOULD WORK TO VIETNAM'S BENEFIT.

16. (C) NIEN EXPRESSED THE GVN'S GREAT "ANNOYANCE" AT RECENT CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTIONS DIRECTED AT VIETNAM. AMB. PETERSON REPEATED THAT WHICH HE HAD RECENTLY TOLD TO DEPUTY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CHAIRMAN QUANG: THERE IS A CONSTITUTIONALLY DEFINED DIVISION OF POWERS IN OUR GOVERNMENT. SUCH ACTIONS AS THE NON-BINDING RESOLUTIONS RESULT FROM CONSTITUENT GROUP PRESSURES ON CONGRESS AND DO NOT TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE U.S' BROADER RELATIONS WITH COUNTRIES. HE REITERATED THE USG'S COMMITMENT TO BUILDING THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP AND ITS RECOGNITION OF VIETNAM'S GOVERNMENT, DESPITE WHAT MIGHT APPEAR IN NON-BINDING CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTIONS CALLING THAT FACT INTO QUESTION.

17. (C) NIEN SHIFTED TO GENERAL SECRETARY LE KHA PHIEU'S RECENT OFFICIAL TRIP TO FRANCE, ITALY AND THE EU. DESCRIBING IT AS "VERY POSITIVE," HE SAID THE EUROPEANS "WERE MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT US THAN WE ARE." HE HOPED THE USG WOULD FOLLOW THE SAME POSITIVE COURSE REGARDING VIETNAM, THAT THIS WOULD BE REFLECTED IN THE U.S.' APPROACH TOWARD THE BTA.

18. (C) ON THE BTA, AMB. PETERSON SAID HE WANTED TO STRESS THAT, IF MINISTER OF TRADE VU KHOAN GOES TO WASHINGTON TO MEET WITH USTR BARSCHESKY IN RESPONSE TO HER RECENT INVITATION, THAT HE GO WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO FINALIZE THE AGREEMENT. IF NOT, THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DAMAGE TO THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP COULD BE QUITE SEVERE. THE GVN SHOULD THINK VERY CAREFULLY ABOUT THIS, HE ADDED. IT WOULD BE BETTER TO TELL US THAT THE GVN HAD DECIDED TO PUT OFF ALL FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE BTA UNTIL VIETNAM WAS READY RATHER THAN TO SEND KHOAN WITH DEMANDS THE USG WOULD FIND UNACCEPTABLE. THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT WE ARE DEALING WITH SO MANY ISSUES THAT ARE REACHING A HEAD FOR DECISIONMAKING THAT IT IS FRAYING OUR COLLECTIVE NERVES.

19. (C) THE RELATIONSHIP IS STILL FRAGILE, THE AMBASSADOR ADDED. BOTH SIDES NEED TO AVOID THE MINOR  
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IRRITANTS SO AS TO BE UNDISTRACTED IN PURSUING THE BIGGER ISSUES. FOR EXAMPLE, MFA PROTOCOL'S RECENT EFFORTS TO RESTRICT THE U.S. EMBASSY'S NORMAL ACTIVITIES IMPLIES A BREACH OF TRUST. SUCH ACTIONS "STRETCH THE FABRIC" OF OUR RELATIONSHIP. CORDIALITY IS CENTRAL IF THE MFA AND OUR DIPLOMATS ARE TO BE ABLE TO WORK CONSTRUCTIVELY TOGETHER. NIEN GAVE THE PREDICTABLE MFA REPLY OF "WE DON'T DISCRIMINATE IN THIS. IT'S NORMAL." AMB. PETERSON REPLIED THAT WE DO NOT MAKE SUCH DEMANDS LIMITING DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES ON SRV AMB. LE VAN BANG AND HIS DIPLOMATS IN THE U.S. DEMANDS SUCH AS INSISTING THE EMBASSY NOTIFY THE MFA EACH TIME IT HELD A PUBLIC EVENT OR SEEKING CLEARANCE OF EVERY MAILING WE MADE TO VIETNAMESE SHOWS LACK OF TRUST AND "CAUSES ME PERSONAL PAIN." SUCH IRRITANTS ARE EASILY AVOIDABLE AND SHOULD BE AVOIDED. NIEN SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AND WOULD "CHECK" INTO THIS ISSUE. HE AGREED BOTH SIDES NEEDED TO MAINTAIN TRUST. (COMMENT: NIEN HAS GIVEN THE SAME "WE'LL CHECK INTO THIS" REPLY WHENEVER THE AMBASSADOR HAS RAISED SIMILAR CONCERNS IN THE PAST. THE OFFICIAL HARASSMENT HAS CONTINUED OR INCREASED SINCE. END COMMENT.)

10. (C) AMB. PETERSON SAID ONE AREA WHERE THE USG IS DEMONSTRATING CONCRETELY ITS COMMITMENT TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE RELATIONSHIP IS IN AID. USAID WILL SOON SET UP AN OFFICE HERE AND WILL BEGIN TO PROVIDE DIRECT ASSISTANCE. UNDER COMMODITY EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, THE U.S. HAS JUST TRANSFERRED AN ENTIRE HOSPITAL (WITHOUT

STAFF) TO CENTRAL VIETNAM AND WE ARE PROVIDING \$3  
MILLION FOR ADDITIONAL HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS. NIEN  
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WELCOMED SUCH AID, BUT ADDED VIETNAM ALSO NEEDED AID TO  
DEAL WITH AGENT ORANGE.

11. (C) THE AMBASSADOR SAID THE USG COULD HELP VIETNAM  
WITH HEALTH PROBLEMS, REGARDLESS OF THE CAUSE. HE  
STRESSED, HOWEVER, ON AGENT ORANGE, THE SCIENCE HAS YET  
TO BE DONE. HE SAID HE PLANNED TO DISCUSS WITH THE  
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES THE IDEA OF INVITING SRV  
SCIENTISTS TO A MEETING IN THE U.S. TO DISCUSS WORKING  
ON A FRAMEWORK FOR JOINT COOPERATION ON RESEARCHING  
AGENT ORANGE. HE HAS ALREADY ASKED MOSTE MINISTER NHA  
TO MAKE SCIENTISTS AVAILABLE.

12. (C) NIEN HAD NO FURTHER COMMENTS ON AGENT ORANGE.  
HE RETURNED TO THE BTA, URGING GREATER FLEXIBILITY FROM  
THE USG. THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT HE HAD JUST  
ATTENDED A UNDP PRESENTATION OUTLINING VIETNAM'S  
GREATEST NEEDS FOR DEVELOPMENT FOR THE NEXT DECADE.  
THE NUMBER ONE RECOMMENDATION WAS THAT VIETNAM SIGN THE  
BTA IMMEDIATELY AS IS. THE BTA LAYS OUT ALL THE  
PRECONDITIONS FOR CREATING THE MOST JOBS, GROWTH OF  
WEALTH, A MORE OPEN INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT, ETC. THIS  
STUDY IS AIMED AT THE CPV'S UPCOMING NINTH PARTY  
CONGRESS. THE PLANNING NEEDS TO BE DONE NOW IF THE  
ENORMOUS POTENTIAL OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE IS TO BE  
REALIZED, HE SAID.

13. (C) COMMENT: TYPICALLY FOR SRV OFFICIALS, NIEN  
HAD NOTHING NEW OR TERRIBLY INSIGHTFUL TO SAY ON U.S.-  
SRV RELATIONS, PARALLELING VICE FM BIN'S CONVERSATIONS  
WITH U/S PICKERING ON THE SAME SUBJECTS. THE PRINCIPAL  
VALUE IN THE MEETING WAS FOR THE AMBASSADOR TO CONVEY  
TO THE SENIOR LEVEL USG THINKING ON A RANGE OF ISSUES.  
NIEN AND HIS COLLEAGUES WILL LISTEN EQUALLY AS CLOSELY  
WHEN THE AMBASSADOR RETURNS TO FILL THEM IN ON THE  
LATEST THINKING ON VIETNAM IN WASHINGTON.  
HARTER.

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